

# CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

*Published every Saturday, corner of Ninth and Race st.—Price \$2 per ann. payable quarterly in advance.*

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1820.

NO. 10.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xiii. 34.

## EPISTLE

*Of the Eastern Association of Universalists in annual session at Paris, Me. A. D. 1820,*

To the believers in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, who compose this branch of our Zion; To the brethren of the same precious faith, which was counted to the father of the faithful for righteousness; To the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ of every name; And to all the ransomed of the Lord withersoever this Epistle may come, we send christian salutation and benediction.

**BELoved BRETHREN,**—Having tasted and known that the Lord is gracious, our hearts rejoice with filial confidence, in every dispensation of his guardian providence. Under the economy of his government, we conceive, that judgments and mercies will all eventuate in the most conspicuous display of his glory, which consists essentially, in his underived, unlimited and endless goodness, and is inseparable from the ultimate perfection and happiness of the whole intellectual family.

With these consistent and blissful views of the divine administration, we can kiss the rod of chastisement with penitent submission, receive the cup of blessing with filial gratitude, and at all times and in every place, rejoice that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Some events and seasons are, however, calculated more immediately to swell the tide of enjoyment than others. Among these, we number with every increasing gratitude, the anniversary association of the believers in "the common salvation."

It is with sentiments of christian love and fellowship, that we inform our brethren generally, that we have enjoyed under the guardian providence of our Creator, another of those auspicious, solemn and improving seasons. We have nothing extraordinary to communicate, but many circumstances concurred to render the session impressive and

improving. The weather, though warm, was favourable to the purposes of our meeting as those from a considerable distance, who were disposed, could attend the public solemnities, and enjoy with the regular members of the council, the improvement and the pleasures of the sanctuary.

The information received by letters and oral communications was refreshing to the lovers of Jesus. It showed us, that though the laborers are few, and in many places they have been able to obtain but little preaching, there has still been a general growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It does not appear that there has been a diminution of numbers in any society, while in some there has been a very respectable increase in numbers, talents and virtues. Our hearts were rejoiced exceedingly, to learn from authentic sources, that a spirit of love and good fellowship prevails through the whole connexion.

The number of believers from different parts of the State was respectable, and among them we noticed some of the more venerable fathers and mothers of our Israel from distant towns, who have distinguished themselves by dauntless intrepidity and persevering faithfulness in the camp of the captain of salvation; and with these were united many younger sons of Zion, who manifested an intelligent zeal for the doctrine of the cross, the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the advancement of his peaceful kingdom. These were highly interesting classes of believers. The one strengthened our confidence by their venerable aspects and the weight of their experience in the religion of Jesus; and the other encouraged and rejoiced our hearts by the vigour, the zeal and the delight with which they commence their labors in the vineyard of the Lord. With mingled emotions of tearful and rapturous joy, we alternately hung upon the lips of the one and the other. The old, storied scenes of former days, rehearsed the time and

the means of their conversion to the faith and the joys of the great salvation, related the reproaches they have borne, the crosses they have endured, the trials they have encountered, and the victories which God has given them thro' our Lord Jesus Christ; the few that were then with them in the faith of the gospel, and the many that now unite in hymning public hosannahs to the Son of David as the Saviour of the world; the young caught the fervor of the relation, and proclaimed their determination to go and do likewise.

The spirit of christian candor and liberality influenced all our labors, and rendered them individually and collectively profitable. Reciprocal cordiality filled every heart, and consecrated all our powers to the great interests of the meeting. Metaphysical subtilities, and questions of an abstruse nature, which might gender strife, were carefully avoided, and the plain, incontrovertible truths of the gospel prayerfully attended to.

The public services were honoured with respectable numbers, who listened with avidity to repeated dispensations of the word of life, which dropped as rain and distilled as the dew. Four discourses were delivered in the demonstration of the spirit and power of truth which maketh free indeed. Many, we believe, who had not before known the scriptures, neither the power of God, were constrained inwardly to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Saviour of the world. It was to all a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; but some circumstances served partially to embitter our cup. Several societies in fellowship with the association were not regularly represented; and a number of ministering brethren, who were confidently expected, were not with us.

We feel it our duty, in the spirit of christian love and faithfulness, to call the attention of all our brethren, and especially the preachers, to the importance of punctually attending our an-



nual meetings. We are apprehensive that some may not have paid such attention to all the bearings of this subject, as to perceive its intimate connexion with duty, as laborers in the gospel vineyard, and with christian policy in advancing the great cause in which we are mutually engaged. The furtherance of any object, embracing a common interest, requires mutual understanding, mutual deliberation, efforts and feelings.

Our annual associations are peculiarly favourable to these things. Here we meet in love, and reciprocate our sentiments and views, our hopes and our joys, our trials and triumphs. Here we obtain a correct knowledge of the progress of truth generally, and in particular places, the obstacles to be removed, and the circumstances which may be seized and turned to a profitable use. A word to the wise is sufficient, and therefore, without enlarging, we indulge a hope, that these brief hints will have a suitable influence, upon the future proceedings of every society and every brother.

May a deep and thankful sense of divine goodness in prospering our previous efforts in the gospel of our holy Master, impart vigour to our future exertions. Who can compare the number and prospects of our societies now, with what they were twenty years ago, and not feel a rapturous glow of encouragement and joy. It is true we have wept the exit of those revered fathers whose feet were then beautiful upon the mountains, who brought good tidings of good to the people, and published peace and salvation in the name of the Lord. The convincing lips of our BARNES and the eloquent tongue of our ROOR, are distuned and silenced in death; but God has raised up others to stand in their place, to preach the gospel they preached, and to adorn the doctrine which they adorned.

*Brethren in the Ministry of Life,*—Suffer the word of exhortation to live and to walk worthy of your succession. Remember, ever remember, that it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful; faithful in preaching the word, in delivering to each one his portion in due season, and faithful in imitating the examples of the lowly Redeemer. Faithfully warn the transgressor of his *real* danger, rebuke him

sharply for his impious, his daring rebellion against the authority of heaven; and by the tender mercies of our God, by the faithfulness, the love, the compassion of Jesus, exhort the sinner to repentance, faith and obedience. Be distinct in explaining and enforcing the certainty of the horrible punishment which awaits the workers of iniquity. But in all cases endeavour to conform your warnings and rebukes to his, who had compassion on the ignorant and on them that were out of the way.—Let every labor either of faithfulness or love, close with the melting, the soul-subduing language and spirit of the expiring Redeemer, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." May you finish your course with joy to testify the gospel of God, hear the welcome plaudit of the great Judge, "Well done good faithful servants, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord," and "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

*Brethren of the Abrahamic Faith,*—You have peace in believing and joy in the holy spirit. You know how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. You believe the record which God hath given of his Son, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. You have received the end of your faith in the sacred record of this divine gift, even the salvation of your souls. Let not then your faith be evil spoken of. Remember that the ablest defence and the only effectual recommendation of it, are a good conversation and a holy life. Strive therefore to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Would our limits permit, inclination would lead us to lay before our brethren, who see not eye to eye with us, the reasons of our faith, and the grounds of our joys; but we have only room to commend them to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all who are sanctified. But the feelings of our hearts will not permit us to close, without tendering the testimony of esteem and gratitude to

the church and society in Paris, who opened to us the doors of their Meeting House, and to the brethren who received us so affectionately, and provided for us so liberally on this occasion.

Christian brethren and friends, accept our thanks, our cordial affection, and rest assured that fervent prayers shall evermore ascend from the altar of our hearts, that the choicest benedictions of heaven may be multiplied to you and your children through time and eternity. *By order of the Association,*  
SEBASTIAN STREETER.

—00—

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

#### BRIEF SKETCHES. No. IV.

The clouds which had long been gathering seemed now completely to envelope the christian religion (so called,) in midnight darkness;—the bones of the saints were raised from the chambers of death, and were, in the estimation of deluded men, sufficiently powerful to heal physical maladies, and recall the soul to the body of the dead; many impositions were practised, and the bones of animals were substituted to be bathed by the tears of the devout, as the relict of some saint, who was supposed to lean over the arch of heaven contemplating with pleasure this species of human devotion.

Monachism maintained the first place among these absurdities; yet there can be little doubt but, in the commencement, it originated from sentiments exalted and pious; who is there, who has not at times retired from the discord, the perplexity that awaits us amid our temporal concerns, to the solemn stillness of retirement, where free from bustle, man may bow before his maker and meditate on that change which some day must release him from life and its activity—yet, this temporary recluse became abused, and we find men unmindful of the duty they owe society, retiring for ever from the scene, and burying talents, and utility in the hermit's cell, and extinguishing that light, which was intended to shine before men,—The enthusiasm after a time, however, abated in some degree; monks found means to join society with retirement, and crime with devotion, the monasteries resembled princely palaces, and deriving income from the purchase money of

wickedness to the op priests property anathema them. T rant in the to the fo tures were being una nal; their ly of desc over the benefit of

In this sistical h ing laid b ed him rep Jerusalem tians ma mind, and tendom fo the sacred the Sarac lated the from heav mies that cross;—t in the sou pervades man hear and holds glory to t had himse itary life u and used he present could read sent him zeal of be

In the i Clermont, Peter add claimed f and by a p himself, s that every ration, "I will of G banners, a 300,000 m tinople.—

Let our standard t dealings others as unto you.



wickedness, from the forgiveness of sins, to the opulent villain. The artifice of priests declared their possessions, the property of God, and pronounced the anathema against him who should touch them. The secular clergy were ignorant in the extreme, for from the twelfth, to the fourteenth century, the scriptures were scarcely known, the clergy being unable to read them in the original; their sermons consisted principally of descriptions of the power of saints over the devil, their watchings, and the benefit of holy water.

In this period, so degrading to ecclesiastical history, Peter the hermit, having laid by the sword which had gained him reputation, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the sufferings of the christians made a deep impression on his mind, and he determined to rouse Christendom for their defence: to drive from the sacred sepulchre, the profane foot of the Saracen,—he returned to Europe, related the communications he received from heaven, and offered to lead the armies that might be raised to defend the cross;—there is something enchanting in the sound of war, its magic influence pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, it speaks to its weaknesses, and holds the light of ambition and of glory to the gaze of the fearless. Peter had himself felt the allurements of a military life under the counts of Boulogne, and used every art to gain his purpose, he presented to the people (few of whom could read) a letter which he said was sent him from heaven to animate the zeal of believers in the glorious work.

In the immense council assembled at Clermont, by orders of Pope Urban II. Peter addressed the assembly, he proclaimed full absolution to their sins, and by a popular eloquence peculiar to himself, so wrought on their minds, that every voice cried out as by inspiration, "It is the will of God! it is the will of God!" Thousands joined his banners, and in 1096, at the head of 300,000 men, he marched to Constantinople.—

To be continued.

Let our Saviour's golden rule be the standard to regulate your actions and dealings with the world. Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you.

## Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, October 7, 1820.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"Neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the Love of God." Romans, viii. 38—9.

How excessively painful and distressing—how dark and comfortless would be our situation when about to be deprived by death of one we held most dear, and in whom were concentrated all our hopes—all our affections and desires, were it not for the consolations afforded by religion, 'Tis she alone, that renders the bereavement supportable, by assuring us that our parting shall not be forever. Every religion, however, is not equally calculated to afford consolation in this afflicting hour. The orthodox doctrines of the day, instead of soothing our affliction, and "binding up the broken heart," add to it another and more bitter pang.—They leave the mind in horrid doubt as to the final state of the object we mourn—though to our sight, all fair and beautiful, he may be a reprobate under the malediction of an angry God, and should we again meet, it may be in those pictured regions of woe and misery, where our own eternal torments will be augmented by witnessing, the agonies of the object of our affection, without the possibility of our rendering to him any, the least assistance. But should our lot be a more happy one than his,—should we be destined for heaven, our joys will be alloyed by a recollection of the heart rending condition, to which he is eternally consigned; for that heaven, the inhabitants of which will be taught to exult in the damnation of their sinful fellow creatures, where the joys of the Father are increased by the torments of the Son—of the Son by those of the father—of the husband by those of the beloved wife of his bosom—the fond partaker, in time, of all his joys and pains, is the mere fiction of some cruel mind; such beings on earth would be infamous, and we have no warrant from scripture for believing that what constitutes our vices in time, will in eternity become virtues.

How, I ask, can any one derive from such religion any solid hope by which to alleviate the afflictions of that hour, when we are called upon to mourn at the bed of death, where lies a relation, or a friend—"a favoured bridegroom or a beauteous bride."

The doctrine of *Universal Benevolence*, is the only one calculated, at that hour to mingle "the balsams and balms" of comfort, and pour "the wine and the oil" on every bleeding heart; it wipes from the eye of the mourner, the streaming tear, and pointing to the mansions of eternal day, whispers to his wounded spirit, that after a few more years shall have rolled their way onward towards eternity, he shall again meet the object of his grief in the midst of joy, never to part again; and should he mourn the loss of one whose life had been a life of sin, this religion comforts him by the assurance, that on that morn when this mortal shall have put on immortality, this corruptible, incorruption—he shall be reunited to him, not as the vile object with which he parted in time, but purged from all unholiness, and rendered pure by the blood of the everlasting covenant; though his sins were as scarlet, they shall be white as snow—though they were red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

The believer in this, the religion of Christ, when it is his maker's will, willingly resigns all he holds most dear, to the cold embrace of the king of terrors, in full assurance that they are exchanging the pains and temptations of a life of sorrow, for an eternity of joy, to the enjoyment of which, he himself is hourly hastening, for he knows that "neither life nor death shall be able to separate him from the love of God," and that when "the earthly house of this tabernacle," shall be destroyed, he has "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

\*\*\*

"FEW AND EVIL ARE THE DAYS OF OUR PILGRIMAGE HERE." Gen. xlvii. 9.

God never intended this world as a lasting habitation for us; and, on a just estimate of the things in it, evil will be found so continually blended with good, that we cannot reasonably set our affections much upon it. Wailing, weak and



defenceless we are ushered into it. Our youth is a scene of folly and danger; our manhood of care, toil and disappointment. Our old age, if happily we reach old age, is a second childhood. Withered, weak and bowed beneath our infirmities, we become as it were, a living hospital of woes; a burden to ourselves, and perhaps an incumbrance to those we love most.

This is the common state of our being. But besides all this, the number of evils in each of these stages, is greatly increased, partly by our own misconduct, and partly by our necessary connexions with others. Moreover, many of those evils are of such a nature, that no prudence of ours can either foresee or prevent them. All the stages of life, necessarily subject us to pains and diseases of body, and many of them to the acute pains of an anxious mind.

Upon the whole, we may pronounce from the highest authority, that "our life is but a vapour which is seen a little while, and then vanishes away; as a tale that is told, and remembered no more; or as a wind that passeth over and cometh not again!"

That man must be thoughtless, indeed, who is not humbled by these reflections. But suppose his own life should pass over as happily as possible, and he should feel but few of these evils himself; yet, unless he shuts his eyes, and his ears from the world around him, he must still find something in it which ought to move the heart to religious sorrow and remembrance of God. Do we not often see tyranny successful, ruthless oppression and persecution, ravaging the globe, the best of men made slaves to the worst, and the lovely image of the deity spurned, dishonoured, disfigured! How many men, of genuine worth, are cast out by fortune to mourn in solitary places, unseen, unpitied; while wickedness riots in the face of day, or pampers in lordly palaces? How many pine in the confinement of dungeons; or are chained down, for offences not their own, to the galleys for life! How many bleed beneath the sword, and bite the ground in all the sad variety of anguish, to sate the cruel ambition of contending masters! How many are deprived of their estates, and disappointed in their most sanguine expectations, by the malice of secret and open enemies, or, which is far more

piercing, the treachery of pretended friends! How many are tortured with all the horrors of a guilty mind, and the bitterest remorse for irreparable injuries! How many pursue each other with the most implacable malice and resentment! How many bring the acutest misery upon themselves by their own intemperance! How many condemn their souls to a kind of Hell, even in their own bodies, by an unhappy temper, and the violent commotions of disordered blood! How many are rendered completely wretched in their families, and are constantly galled by the unavoidable misfortunes of their dearest friends!—On the one hand, the distress of the needy, the injuries of the oppressed, the cries of the widow and the orphan, pierce our ears. On the other, we hear the voice of lamentation and mourning; our friends and neighbours weeping for dear relations, suddenly snatched away, and "refusing to be comforted because they are not." Here one's heart is torn assunder by having a beloved wife or child snatched from his side!—There another bewails the loss of an affectionate parent or brother! Here sturdy manhood drops instantly beneath the sudden stroke! There blooming youth falls a premature victim to a doom seemingly too severe!—Beneath the cold hand of death, the roses are blasted; restless agility and vigour, are become the tamest things; and beauty, elegance and strength, one putrid lump!

Without remembering that there is a God, that overrules all events, what hope or comfort could we have, when we reflect on all these common miseries of life, and many more that might be enumerated? Did we, with the Atheist, believe them to spring up from the dust, or to be the blind effects of unintelligible chance, and of undirected matter and motion, what a poor condition should we think ourselves in here? would not all appear as "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, under the shadow of death, without any order, where the light is as darkness." Surely we should not wish to live in the world, upon such a precarious footing as this. And yet we should not know whither to fly from it, unless into the darker state of dreary annihilation, at the thoughts of which the astonished soul shudders and recoils; upon such a scheme all our

hopes would be thin as the spider's web, and lighter than chaff that is dispersed through the air. Our adversity would hurry us into the most invincible despair, and our prosperity would be as a bubble bursting at every breath. Philosophy would be a dream, and our boasted fortitude mere unmeaning pretention, but on the other hand, if "when our souls are cast down within us, we will remember that there is a God," whose great view in creating us was to make us happy, whose design in affliction, is always to reclaim us, and who governs the world by his providence, only to conduct all to the greatest general good of his creatures—then, and not till then, we shall have sure footing. We shall neither raise our hopes too high, nor sink them too low. If fortune is kind, we shall enjoy her smiles without forgetting the hand that guides her, if she frowns, we shall feel our woes as men, but shall nobly bear them, as christians; for if we are really christians, our holy religion teaches us that this scene of things is but a very small part of the mighty scheme of heaven; that our present life is only the dim dawn of our existence; that we shall shortly put off this load of infirmities and sin, and be translated to a state, where "every tear shall be wiped from every eye, and where there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, because the former things are passed away."

With our eyes thus fixed upon heaven, trusting in the mercies of our redeemer, and animated by the gospel promises, we shall urge our glorious course along the track of virtue, bravely withstanding the billows of adversity, on either side, and triumphing in every dispensation of Providence.

#### FLATTERY.

Guard against flattery as you would against the wiles of a serpent. It debases and degrades a man to suffer the cunning to obtain any influence over him by flattery. Therefore, when you see a person endeavouring to gain your favour by such despicable means, frown upon him as you would upon one who should attempt to poison you; for no poison is so much to be dreaded as flattery.

Publi

VOL.

FOR

BR

It m  
mense  
posed  
well to  
gion;  
made  
malefa  
wishes  
tation  
a band  
ders w  
valued  
the for  
armies  
design  
fice it  
ly succ

Bet  
macy  
the ref  
doctrin  
anity.  
prostra  
was el  
was co  
viour  
to be  
the sin  
red ne  
and th  
ny oth  
gation

The  
worse  
offence  
punish  
diate  
which  
profita  
masses  
the wa  
ment  
the de  
which  
the ch  
forme

It v  
lent, t  
lax th